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ACTION DS-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-05	AID-01	AMAD-01	ARA-01	A-01	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	SJK-01	COME-00	CTME-00	C-01
	ZOVD-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	EB-01	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	IMMC-01
	INRE-00	INR-01	INSE-00	JUSE-00	L-02	ADS-00	M-01
	NEA-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIS-01	PA-01	PM-01
	P-01	SCT-03	SSO-00	SS-01	TRSE-00	USIE-00	USSS-00

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O 180033Z MAR 92
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4244
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

RELEASED IN FULL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 02649

DEPT FOR DS/OPS/ARA, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/CI/CT

SANTIAGO, ASUNCION, LIMA, MONTEVIDEO, BRASILIA AND RIO
JANEIRO FOR RSO

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E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: ASEC, PTER
SUBJECT: BOMBING OF BUENOS AIRES' ISRAELI EMBASSY

1. A POWERFUL EXPLOSION ROCKED THE SITE OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY LOCATED IN A COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL AREA IN DOWNTOWN BUENOS AIRES ON 3/17/92, AT APPROXIMATELY 14:45 (LOCAL TIME). THE FORCE OF THE EXPLOSION LITERALLY BROUGHT DOWN THE THREE-STORY EMBASSY BUILDING AND CAUSED EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO THE SURROUNDING AREAS.

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2. INITIAL ASSESSMENT BY WITNESSES ON THE SCENE AND SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS BY LOCAL POLICE INDICATE THAT THE EXPLOSION WAS NOT, AS INITIALLY HYPOTHESIZED, A GAS EXPLOSION BUT RATHER AN EXPLOSION CAUSED BY EITHER A BOMB THAT WAS SMUGGLED INSIDE THE ISRAELI EMBASSY, AND OR AS A RESULT OF POSSIBLY ONE OR TWO CAR BOMBS GOING OFF SIMULTANEOUSLY OUTSIDE OF THE EMBASSY. AN ISRAELI SECURITY OFFICER TOLD DAO HE BELIEVES THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION FROM INSIDE THE BUILDING WHICH HAD BEEN UNDERGOING EXTENSIVE REMODELING.

3. ALTHOUGH THE CHIEF OF POLICE HAS GONE ON RECORD AS SAYING THAT THE ISRAELI EMBASSY WAS BOMBED, NO CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE AS OF THIS MOMENT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AS TO THE CUASE OF THE EXPLOSION.

4. ARGENTINE PRESIDENT, CARLOS MENNEM, PUBLICLY EXPRESSED HIS SHOCK AT THIS INCIDENT. AS OF THIS MOMENT, THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT A COMMUNIQUE ACCEPTING
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RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS BOMBING HAS BEEN RECEIVED EITHER BY THE GOA OR THE LOCAL MEDIA.

5. INITIAL DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS INDICATE THAT ANYWHERE FROM TWO TO FIVE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REPORTED KILLED AND APPROXIMATELY 70 PEOPLE INJURED. RESCUERS STILL ARE SEARCHING THE RUBBLE FOR POSSIBLE SURVIVORS. THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR IS ALIVE AND WELL AND WE HAVE OFFERED HIS EMBASSY OUR ASSISTANCE.

6. THE U.S. EMBASSY HAS NO INDICATION AT THIS TIME THAT ANY AMERICAN CITIZENS HAVE BEEN INJURED OR KILLED, IN ADDITION, THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT ANY AMERICAN PROPERTY HAS SUFFERED ANY DAMAGE.

7. AN EAC MEETING WAS HELD AT THIS EMBASSY AT APPROXIMATELY 1730 AND ALL INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME WAS REVIEWED. THOUGH NO THREATS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY THE U.S. EMBASSY, THE SECURITY POSTURE WAS REVIEWED. IT WAS DECIDED THAT AN ADDITIONAL OUTSIDE PERIMETER FOOTPATROL WOULD BE ADDED TO THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AS WELL AS THE EMBASSY. ALSO, A GUARD WOULD BE PLACED AT THE MARINE RESIDENCE UNTIL THIS INCIDENT IS

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CLARIFIED. IN ADDITION, THE LOCAL GUARD FORCE WAS SENSITIZED TO THE INCIDENT AND MORE PRUDENT PATROLING HAS BEEN EMPHASIZED, WITH REGARDS TO THE AREAS OUTSIDE OF THE EMBASSY, THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. THE USIS LINCOLN CULTURAL CENTER WAS ALSO ADVISED TO MORE THOROUGHLY SEARCH THE LIBRARY BEFORE CLOSE OF BUSINESS THIS DATE. ALSO, THE

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AMERICAN SCHOOL WAS ADVISED OF THE INCIDENT.

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8. A PRESS CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE SOMETIME LATER THIS EVENING BY THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR. HIS COMMENTS AS WELL AS FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL.
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